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Issue Brief

Issue Brief: Euro Americans and Latinos

Key Words: Whites, Latinos, Relative Population, Identity, Demographic Change

Description: Latino-Americans and Euro-Americans are not mutually exclusive groups as these groups have a great deal of overlap as this terminology is imperfect. That said, Hispanics/Latinos are the fastest growing ethnoracial group in the United States. By 2050 non-Hispanic whites will no longer have a majority share in the U.S. Population.

Key Points:

- Hispanics or Latinos are the fastest growing ethnoracial group in American society.
- The US Census defines “Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish” origin as an ethnic category apart from race.
- The US Census Bureau projects that by 2050, Latinos will make up over a quarter of the U.S. population.
- The rapid growth of the Latino population is the primary reason the US Census Bureau projects that whites will no longer be an ethnoracial majority in the United States by 2050.

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The 2010 US Census cites the definition of “Hispanic or Latino” thusly: “‘Hispanic or Latino’ refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.” This inclusive definition is more nuanced than the more rigid definition promoted by the classic Ethnoracial Penatagon—wherein African-American, Euro-American (white), Hispanic/Latino-American, Asian-American, and American Indian are discrete

groups—by which American races are often differentiated. The Census Bureau considers Latino/Hispanic origin to be a separate concept from race, and as such the Hispanic population in the 2010 census largely identified as either white or some other race.

→ NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 5 about Hispanic origin and Question 6 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.


5. Is this person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?


☐ No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

☐ Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano

☐ Yes, Puerto Rican


☐ Yes, Cuban



☐ Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — Print origin, for example, Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on. 


6. What is this person's race? Mark  one or more boxes.

☐ White

☐ Black, African Am., or Negro

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native — Print name of enrolled or principal tribe. 

<input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Japanese	<input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian
<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Korean	<input type="checkbox"/> Guamanian or Chamorro
<input type="checkbox"/> Filipino	<input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese	<input type="checkbox"/> Samoan
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian — Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander — Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on. 	

☐ Some other race — Print race. 

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census questionnaire

From the 2010 Census Form, Pew Hispanic Center

Ethnoracial definitions in America have not drawn always an exclusive distinction between white and Latino, historically. The US Census did not begin asking about Hispanic/Latino heritage until 1970, as Hispanic/Latino heritage was considered a subset of Euro or White American. Additionally, Latino racial identity is not monolithic. While 51% of respondents in the 2006 Latino National Study identified Hispanic/Latino as an individual race, 49.9% of Cuban Americans self-identified as white. Cuban Americans, as a group, are particularly likely to self-identify as white, although that's changing over time. While Cuban Americans were far more likely to self-identify as white in 2006 than other Latino nation-origin groups, they were almost twice as likely to do so twenty years earlier, when 92.5% self-identified as white. Additionally, some Latinos may self-identify as black or

Asian as well as Latino. Similarly, however, “white” is not a hard and fast definition either. Both terms are relative, with porous borders and a great deal of overlap. The trend over the past forty years has moved Hispanic/Latinos into their own distinct ethnoracial category.

Table 1 U.S. Population, Actual and Projected: 2005 and 2050		
	2005	2050
Population (in millions)	296	438
Share of total		
Foreign born	12%	19%
Racial/Ethnic Groups		
White	67%	47%
Hispanic	14%	29%
Black	13%	13%
Asian	5%	9%
Age Groups		
Children (17 and younger)	25%	23%
Working age (18–64)	63%	58%
Elderly (65 and older)	12%	19%
Note: All races modified and not Hispanic; American Indian/ Alaska Native not shown. See "Methodology."		
Source: Pew Research Center, 2008		

Projected Population Growth by Ethnoracial Category, Source: Pew Hispanic Center

One reason that both the US Census Bureau began measuring Latinos and Latinos began self-identifying as a distinct ethnoracial group is the marked growth within the Latino population. In the 1970 Census, 9.6 million Americans self-reported Hispanic/Latino heritage. In the 2010 census, 50.5 million Americans self-identified as Hispanic/Latino, constituting 16% of the U.S. population, making them the largest ethnoracial bloc in the United States behind non-Hispanic whites. The Latino/Hispanic population grew by 43 percent in the decade after 2000. This rapid growth in the Hispanic/Latino community accounted for over half the growth population-wide in this decade. In conjunction with the growth in the Asian-American population, and the relative steadiness of the

African-American and the American Indian populations are resulting in the steady relative decrease in the proportion of the U.S. population who self-identify as Euro-American, or white. Whites have had majority population status throughout United States' history. In 2005, Euro-Americans were 67% of the population, but by 2050 whites are projected to be only 47% of the total American population, should trends—and factors such as immigration laws—continue as they have for the half-century preceding. The transition from Euro-American majority to Euro-American plurality is expected to happen primarily as a result of Latino/Hispanic population growth.

As the Latino population continues to grow relative to the Euro-American population, it is important to keep in mind that not only may Latinos racially identify as white, but also that the number individuals reporting multiple races is also on the rise. The largest percentage of individuals reporting belonging to two or more races report both white and black, but multiple-race combinations are on the rise among the Hispanic/Latino population as well. The most commonly reported multiple-race combinations involve White. Hispanics reported multiple-race combinations involving both White and Some Other Race. Given that an individual may self-identify as ethnically Latino and racially white and his or her sibling of same parentage may choose to report being Some Other Race while ethnically Latino and yet a third sibling could elect to self-identify as being of multiple races, the belief in these categories as impermeable borders seems irrational. As time goes on the concept of difference between Euro-American and Latino-American may become less salient, as will their relative proportions in the population writ large.

Relevant Web Sites

www.pewhispanic.org

www.census.gov

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/specialsections/40th-anniversary/The-Changing-Demographics-of-America.html>

Works Cited

<http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf>

http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hispanic/files/Internet_Hispanic_in_US_2006.pdf

http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&cts=1331172888723&ved=0CDYQFjAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fdepts.washington.edu%2Fuwiser%2Fdocuments%2FWWC_Rollout_FINAL_06.12.07a.ppt&ei=CBZYT_ymO8Hr0gGi8fzTDw&usg=AFQjCNGg5SyW0MI2d4lbEFrWNENrI59wMw&sig2=KnTV_4c1xdiD1mQ-Qahug

<http://www.pewhispanic.org/2008/02/11/us-population-projections-2005-2050/>